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EDUCATION WEEK

American Education's Newspaper of Record | Volume VII, Number 35 · May 25, 1988 | *© 1988 Editorial Projects in Education / $2.00*

Language Skills Are Assessed in Novel State Test

Seen Spurring Shift to Communication Skills

By Robert Rothman

Results from a statewide foreign-language assessment in Connecticut—the nation's first large-scale test of students' language proficiency—are likely to accelerate the drive to overhaul curricula in the field, state and national officials predicted last week.

Data from the 1987 test, which were presented to the state board of education this month, provide evidence to confirm the view that speaking and listening to foreign languages in class forge a more effective route to proficiency than the traditional grammar- and literature-based curriculum, officials said.

Connecticut's test will "speed the national move to communication-based teaching," said C. Edward Scebold, executive director of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Though the state is not mandating that teachers change their instructional practices to reflect the favorable findings on in-class language use, said Joan B. Baron, program director of the Connecticut Assessment of Educational Progress, "when they see the evi-

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State programs are adopting new logotypes and slogans to symbolize fresh approaches.

Reversing Vocational 'Image': Officials Are Turning to P.R.

By Reagan Walker

When officials of the Prince George's County (Md.) Public Schools announced plans this year for a new "professional center" at Largo High School, they were careful not to use the term vocational education.

The center will teach marketable job skills when it opens in 1989—majors in biotechnology; entrepreneurship; finance; and law, management, and public policy are its selling points.

But to call such coursework vocational education, said Brian J. Porter, the system's public-affairs director, would have activated the public's "misunderstandings" about the field.

"We had a strong hesitancy about giving that kind of label to this program," Mr. Porter said.

The Largo center was designed to draw white students from throughout the county to the predominantly black high school.

But even with the care taken to present the program as "professional" rather than "vocational," many parents in the black middle-class neighborhood Largo serves balked when they first heard of the plan.

"Finance was assumed to be bank telling, which was interpreted as a vocational trade," said Mr. Porter. "And a vocational trade, in parents' minds, was less than positive."

The parents expressed concern that the program would be watered down to provide skills-training and would not adequately prepare their children for college.

"Those folks grew up in a time when vocational education was very different," said Mr. Porter. "It prepared you for one skill and your only option after graduation was to find a job using that skill—you were locked in."

"They are sharing that view with their

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Church Day Care Wins Exemption From State Law

Va. Appellate Court's Reversal Spurs Debate

By Deborah L. Gold

Acting in a case that could affect the national debate on day-care regulation, a federal appeals court has upheld a Virginia law that exempts religiously affiliated child-care centers from state licensing requirements.

In reaching its decision, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit reversed its own finding in the case four years ago that the exemption violated the First Amendment's ban on state establishment of religion.

The three-judge panel based its May 6 opinion largely on a U.S. Supreme Court ruling last year that upheld a provision in a federal job-bias law that permits churches to discriminate in employment policies on the basis of religion.

"If an exemption is permissible in the context of employment practices," Judges Donald S. Russell, Kenneth K. Hall, and John D. Butzner Jr. wrote, a court "can only be more solidly justified when it acts to prevent state interference with church programs that provide education and care for children."

Experts say the case, *Forest Hills Early*

Continued on Page 13

Peer Mediation: When Students Agree Not To Disagree

Debra Viadero/Education Week

Joseph Kelliebrew, program coordinator, listens as student mediator makes a point.

By Debra Viadero

WASHINGTON—Sophomore Nikki Palmer said her trouble at Calvin Coolidge High School here began, as many teen-age problems do, "over a guy."

The rest of her story—except for its resolution—follows a predictable course for romantic triangles at many schools.

A female classmate became jealous. Vicious rumors spread. Threats were made. And soon it looked as though the two 10th graders and their friends were destined to come to blows.

The dispute eventually landed on the desk of a school administrator. Many in similar situations might have suspended the young women, called in their parents, or spent hours trying to decipher who started what.

At Coolidge, there was an alternative.

The students were referred to the school's mediation center, where they sat down with classmates trained in the art of negotiation and promptly buried the hatchet. The resulting written contract, which called for both students to refrain from speaking to one another or listening to rumors, was hammered out in less than three class periods.

"I guess they did a pretty good job," Nikki said. "It was better than getting suspended and having a record."

That, say Coolidge officials, is precisely the point of peer mediation.

"When you suspend a student for fighting, that person may go home to the neighborhood and start the same thing up again," said Joseph Kelliebrew, who coordinates the project, called SHARP, for Students Help-

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A Frustrated M.I.T. Severs Its Tie With Boston Partnership

By Kirsten Goldberg

Citing indifference on the part of Boston school officials, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has given up on its effort to create a science and mathematics magnet school and will end its involvement in the city's highly celebrated school-business partnership program.

An M.I.T. official said last week that the university's decision to end its 12-year relationship with the school next month was prompted by recent discussions in the Boston school department regarding the conversion of the Mario Umana Harbor School of Science and Technology into a regular middle school.

"It's simply a question of our capacity to contribute," said Walter L. Milne, who has been M.I.T.'s top official working with the Boston public schools. "We have some expertise in dealing with a science and math school, but not a middle school."

But Joseph Arangio Jr., Umana's headmaster, said there were other, more negative, reasons for the souring of the relationship.

"M.I.T. felt there was a long string of broken promises on the part of the school department," Mr. Arangio said. "They

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Also in the news

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The mayor of Los Angeles proposes to offer after-school services to every elementary student.
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New Survey Finds Low Teacher Morale
"Unempowered" teaching force gives reform a "C" or less, a Carnegie survey reveals.
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New Casualties Possible In War Against Drugs
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The proportion of black 18- to 21-year-olds who had dropped out of high school declined significantly from 1975 to 1985, according to a new study by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. **Page 6.**

Unions as 'Change Agents'
A new analysis commissioned by the Education Department disputes Secretary William J. Bennett's charge that the two national teachers' unions have obstructed school reform. **Page 7.**

Uniforms: A Job Opportunity
An unusual grassroots program offering job training for the unemployed is benefiting from the growing popularity of student uniforms in Baltimore's public schools. **Page 8.**

Raising Standards and Tempers
Efforts by Montana's higher-education board to raise admissions standards for state colleges have upset many precollegiate educators and sparked a continuing statewide debate. **Page 10.**

Squelching Speculation
An aide to Gov. Michael S. Dukakis has dismissed a report that the likely Democratic Presidential nominee may have offered the post of Secretary of Education to a Virginia superintendent. **Page 14.**

Targeting State Aid
Under a newly approved school-aid plan that is the first of its kind, Connecticut will target state funding, in part, to districts whose pupils score below remedial levels on mastery tests. **Page 10.**

Making Science 'Interesting'
Four organizations have received $7.2 million in National Science Foundation grants to create and distribute "hands-on" materials for elementary-school science programs. **Page 19.**

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EDUCATION WEEK (ISSN 0277-4232) is published 40 times per year (weekly except for the first week in January, the last week in June, the month of July, the first four weeks in August, and the last two weeks in December) by Editorial Projects in Education, Incorporated. Editorial and advertising offices are located at 4301 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 250, Washington, D.C. 20008. (202) 364-4114. Subscriptions: U.S.: $47.94 for 40 issues. Canada: $70.94 for 40 issues. Foreign: $112.94 (airmail) and $80.94 (surface mail) for 40 issues. Second-class postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to EDUCATION WEEK, P.O. Box 6987, Syracuse, N.Y. 13217. Volume VII, Issue 35.

ACROSS THE NATION

NATIONAL

Democrats Eye Public-Service Route To College, Job-Training Aid

An influential group of Democratic leaders has advanced a proposal that would replace federal student financial-aid programs with a system allowing young people to earn their college or job-training support through public service.

The Democratic Leadership Council suggests that voluntary national service through a Citizens' Corps could be rewarded with benefits not unlike those in the G.I. Bill.

In return for one or two years of civilian or military service, young enlistees would earn vouchers toward their college tuition, vocational or job training, or housing.

Civilian workers would earn $10,000 each year toward their voucher, plus a $100 weekly stipend while they were in the program. Those who volunteered for military service would earn $12,000 a year toward a voucher, plus the stipend.

The program's aim would be to phase out existing student-loan programs. Borrowing would be available only as supplementary income for needy students.

D.L.C. officials—who include Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia, the chairman, and leading Democratic governors and federal lawmakers—expressed hope that the proposal would be included as part of the Democratic platform. A spokesman for Gov. Michael Dukakis said last week that the candidate supports the proposal's basic philosophy.

■ **In his new report on smoking, U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop exhorts schools to include tobacco-use prevention materials in their health-education curricula.**

The 618-page study issued last week, the 20th in the government's series on smoking, is the first to label the nicotine in tobacco as a highly addictive substance that affects physiology in ways similar to other illegal drugs.

"Many children and adolescents who are experimenting with cigarettes and other forms of tobacco . . . are unaware of, or underestimate, the strength of tobacco addiction," Dr. Koop writes in the preface to the report, "The Health Consequences of Smoking: Nicotine Addiction." "Because this addiction almost always begins during childhood or adolescence, children need to be warned as early as possible, and repeatedly warned through their teen-age years, about the dangers of exposing themselves to nicotine."

STATES

Iowa Court Says Substitutes Entitled to Bargaining Rights

In a unanimous ruling, the Iowa Supreme Court has held that substitute teachers are entitled to the same collective-bargaining rights as full-time teachers.

The court ruled that substitutes "share with regular classroom teachers the common mission of education" and are thus entitled to representation by local teachers' unions.

Substitutes must teach at least one day a month for four consecutive months to be eligible, the justices said, citing a previous ruling.

The case, *Dubuque Community School District* v. *Public Employment Relations Board and the Dubuque Education Association*, began as a dispute between the district and the Iowa Public Employment Relations Board, which ruled in the substitutes' favor last year.

The district appealed that decision to a state district court and won. But the D.E.A., the local affiliate of the National Education Association, appealed the lower court's ruling to the state supreme court.

Dubuque school officials had argued that substitutes should not be included in the same bargaining unit as other teachers because the state's collective-bargaining law treats full- and part-time employees differently. The union contended that substitutes perform the same job functions as full-time teachers.

The substitutes also charged that the district deliberately tried to keep them out of bargaining units by terminating some instructors' jobs before they had worked the required four months, then rehiring them. In its ruling, the court said that substitutes must be given the opportunity to have continuous work.

William L. Sherman, a spokesman for the Iowa State Education Association, an affiliate of the National Education Association, said the ruling directly affects 75 substitutes in Dubuque, and between 1,000 and 2,000 statewide.

Students Prove the Shortest Row Is Down the Roe

Some 5th graders might delight in catching their teacher in an error of fact. But Susie Nardinger's class in Great Falls, Mont., spent six months this year trying to prove her right.

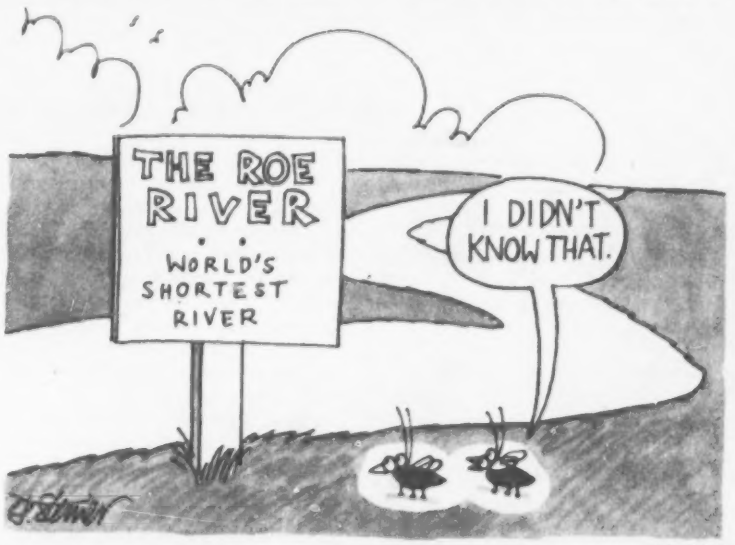
The fact in dispute was the international distinction of Montana's tiny Roe River, which can shrink to a length of less than 50 feet in times of drought and never gets much beyond a few hundred feet.

Ms. Nardinger had told her pupils at Lincoln Elementary School that Montana could boast of having not only the world's largest fresh-water spring but also its shortest river. But when the students reached for the classroom copy of the *Guinness Book of World Records* to verify that claim, the unmapped Roe was nowhere to be found.

Acting on Ms. Nardinger's insistence that she was right, the students undertook what turned out to be a lengthy class project to prove the Guinness book wrong.

"At first, the kids thought they would just have to write to Guinness and the claim would be accepted," Ms. Nardinger says. But they soon found out that much more was required.

To be considered for the world record, the Roe had to be recognized by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. And achieving that recognition, the pupils were told, required official documentation of the river's coordinates and length—and demonstrated community support for the endeavor.



Peter Steiner

So they spoke at community gatherings, wrote to their representatives in the U.S. Congress, and launched a successful petition drive. When the river was officially surveyed, the Montana branch of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names certified that the river's average length was 201 feet.

The national board voted on March 10 to recognize the Roe, and, shortly thereafter, the students got good news from Guinness. Ms. Nardinger had been right: the Roe was, in fact, the world's shortest documented river.

Looking back, the teacher says that "the most enlightening part of the process was that students learned about contacting people, how to speak in public, and the concept that government is the people."

Now alert to the significance of documentation, the class members have compiled a scrapbook tracing their arduous passage through the channels of bureaucracy. —J.W.

Rates of Retention, Graduation for Blacks Up Sharply, Bureau Finds

By Kirsten Goldberg

WASHINGTON—The proportion of young blacks who dropped out of high school declined sharply from 1975 to 1985, while the percentage who earned diplomas showed a corresponding increase, the Census Bureau has found.

Over the 10-year period, the proportion of black 18- to 21-year-olds who were high-school dropouts fell from 27 percent to 17 percent, while the proportion who graduated rose from 61 percent to 71 percent, the bureau reported in a study issued this month.

"The reason for this is obvious: Schools have been working for a decade on improving black retention," said Rosalind R. Bruno, the statistician who conducted the study. "Also, the unemployment rate of dropouts is incredibly high, and for many jobs the basic requirement is a high-school diploma."

The unemployment rate for black 16- to 19-year-olds is 31.4 percent, compared with 14.1 percent for whites in that age group, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Overall, the black unemployment rate is 12.2 percent, compared with 4.6 percent for whites.

No Gains for Hispanics

The declining percentage of black dropouts appears to be part of a long-term trend that began around 1970, Ms. Bruno said.

But similar gains have not been made by Hispanics, according to the Census Bureau data. The proportion of Hispanic 18- to 21-year-olds who had left high school without graduating remained at about 30 percent from 1975 to 1985, the study found.

For whites in that age group, the proportion who had dropped out decreased by 1 percent over the decade. That change was not statistically significant, Ms. Bruno said. The proportion of whites who graduated from school remained at 81 percent during the period studied.

Although the total number of college students increased by 15 percent during the 10-year period, the college-enrollment rate for black 18- to 21-year-olds remained at 25 percent, the study found.

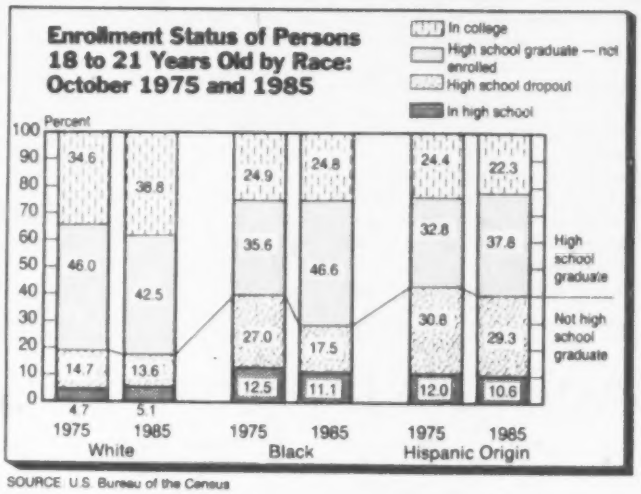
The proportion of whites in that age bracket who were enrolled in college increased from 35 percent in 1975 to 39 percent in 1985.

Most of the growth in college enrollment was among students age 25 or older, the study found. In 1985, 38 percent of all college students were over age 25.

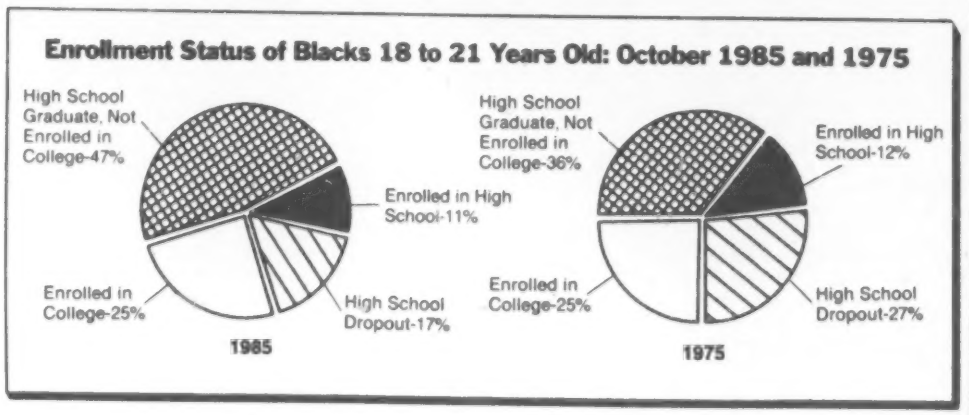
Among other findings from the study:

- About 40 percent of both black and white 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in nursery school in 1985.
- Of the children enrolled in nursery school, 66 percent of the blacks attended school all day, compared with 28 percent of the whites.
- In 1985, 64 percent of the black 3- and 4-year-olds attending nursery school were enrolled in public-school programs, compared with 30 percent of their white counterparts.
- About 64 percent of black kindergartners were attending school all day in 1985, twice the proportion of whites.
- There was no significant difference in nursery-school enrollment between children of mothers who were employed and those whose mothers were not employed. However, slightly more children of working mothers attended full-day programs.
- Total high-school enrollment was 40.8 million in 1985, down from 46.1 million in 1975.

Copies of the study, *School Enrollment—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1985 and 1984* (Series P-20, No. 426), can be ordered from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census


Enrollment Status of Blacks 18 to 21 Years Old: October 1985 and 1975
High School Graduate, Not Enrolled in College-47%
Enrolled in High School-11%
Enrolled in College-25%
High School Dropout-17%
1985
High School Graduate, Not Enrolled in College-36%
Enrolled in High School-12%
Enrolled in College-25%
High School Dropout-27%
1975

Arkansas Coach Fired After Racial Incident

Following an incident in which a black high-school tennis player was not allowed to play a match at an all-white country club, the Forrest City, Ark., school board has voted to fire employees who disobey the board's racial-equality rules

Teresa Whitfield, a visiting tennis player from Earle High School in Earle, Ark., was sent to play her match at a city tennis court by Charles Bowlin, coach of the Forrest City High School team, because she is black.

The president of the Forrest City Country Club said after the April 26 incident that Ms. Whitfield could have played at the club, but noted that Mr. Bowlin had never asked about the club's policies.

The Forrest City board last week drafted a formal apology to Ms. Whitfield, and its president, Marlene Zaleski, said members deeply regretted the incident.

The board's new personnel policy also calls for racial-sensitivity training for school employees.

Jack Hosford, coach of the Earle tennis team, was relieved of his coaching duties last week because he allowed the rest of the team to play at the country club after Ms. Whitfield was forced to play her Forrest City opponent at the public court. Ms. Whitfield won the match.

Earle High School will no longer play Forrest City in tennis, officials said. Ms. Whitfield's parents have hired a lawyer and may sue the Forrest City School District or the country club.

The Forrest City district made national news earlier this spring as well, when its high school held a racially integrated senior prom for the first time since the start of desegregation 20 years ago.

—M.W.

MEDIA

MacNeil-Lehrer Productions and WETA, the Public Broadcasting System affiliate in Washington, are co-producing a five-part series on education to be aired in prime time on P.B.S. stations next spring.

"Learning in America," underwritten by a $3.9-million grant from the Chrysler Corporation, will be hosted by the veteran political correspondent Roger Mudd, who held positions at both NBC News and CBS News before joining the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour.

Through a blending of documentary reporting, interviews, and discussions among prominent educators and policymakers, the series will explore such topics as elementary and early-childhood education, teacher quality, testing, development of a common curriculum, dropout retraining, functional illiteracy, and the allocation of economic resources.

Its first scheduled broadcast will carry the viewer to Japan for an examination of the differences between U.S. and Japanese high schools.

Planners suggest, in a statement released this month announcing the project, that the broadcasts will provide "the most comprehensive public forum ever on this vitally important national issue."

■

A 20-minute video on school-library media programs will be previewed in July at the annual conference of the American Library Association.

The Information Power Video, produced by Encyclopaedia Britannica, was filmed in seven exemplary school-library media centers and features the education-reform leader John I. Goodlad, a professor at the University of Washington.

Karen Whitney, president of the American Association of School Librarians, will include the video in her presentation to the convention. It was produced to incorporate graphically points contained in the association's report, "Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs."

"Viewers of the video will soon see," Mr. Goodlad says, "that since the last guidelines were published 13 years ago, libraries have been redefined."

For further information, contact the Public Information Office, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, Ill. 60611; (312) 944-6780.

■

KIDSNET, a Washington-based nonprofit organization promoting the educational potential of electronic media for children, has received a $150,000 grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to improve its database and conduct a survey of broadcast, print, and audio-visual materials in schools and libraries.

"Radio and television productions can enrich and extend classroom curricula," said John E. Corbally, president of the foundation, "but more often than not, these materials are used inefficiently or inappropriately. KIDSNET solves that problem."

The MacArthur funding will enable the computerized clearinghouse to "enhance the evaluative strengths" of its database, officials said, by including reviews, critiques, and program-awards information.

A $20,000 grant from the Ford Foundation, also announced this spring, will allow KIDSNET to develop greater coverage of programming targeted for minority children.

Further information is available from KIDSNET, 6856 Eastern Ave., N.W., Suite 208, Washington, D.C. 20012; (202) 291-1400.

■

CompuServe's Education Forum is offering a regular series of "online events"—the latest, a chance to talk over reform issues with Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers—to educators who subscribe to the network and have personal computers equipped with a modem and telecommunications software.

Mr. Shanker was scheduled to take part last Thursday in a 90-minute interactive computer conference sponsored by the forum.

Chuck Lynd, manager of the forum and online conference moderator, said that "teachers no longer feel isolated when they can communicate with their colleagues and with leaders like Albert Shanker by simply logging on to a computer network."

He called the network, which is operated by LINC Resources Inc. in Columbus, Ohio, "a new kind of resource that helps empower teachers." In addition to the computer conferences, network members exchange information on a wide variety of topics through the forum's message board, read or "download" files from the forum's libraries, and share public-domain software, he said.

For further details, contact Mr. Lynd at LINC Resources, 3857 North High St., Columbus, Ohio, 43214; (614) 263-5462.

■

Two projects of interest to educators were among the 18 independent productions chosen this spring to receive funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

"The Road to Brown," two 60-minute documentaries giving the personal histories of firsthand participants in the great cases and events of the modern civil-rights movement, will receive production funding from C.P.B.

"The Toughest College Entrance Exam," a 60-minute production using a series of personal profiles to convey the impact of rising college costs on Americans, particularly the disadvantaged, will receive research and development funds.

—M.S.R.

Languages Test Seen Spur to Reforms

Continued from Page 1

dence, they'll run to it."

Language proficiency has been "widespread as an instructional goal," noted Kenneth A. Lester, a foreign-language consultant for the state's bureau of curriculum and instruction, "but there haven't been good outcomes."

The assessment, he said, provides a "benchmark for how well we are attaining our goals."

The results indicate, Mr. Lester noted, that students have a way to go. They performed best on the reading test, and least well in speaking and writing. And they did better on items requiring literal comprehension skills than on those that required them to make inferences or draw conclusions.

But the findings also suggest ways schools can improve their instructional practices to boost proficiency, Mr. Lester said.

In particular, he said, teachers should speak the foreign language exclusively, allow students to speak it as much as possible during class, and employ materials that use everyday vocabulary.

To help teachers who want to change their methods, state officials plan to develop materials and training programs on teaching for proficiency, and to hold a statewide conference on the subject.

In addition, they plan to conduct the assessment again in about five years to gauge students' progress.

New Direction

The foreign-language test was part of the Connecticut Department of Education's ongoing effort to assess student performance in each of the 11 subjects mandated by state law.

Pupils in the 4th, 6th, and 8th grades are tested annually in basic-skills subjects; in the other subjects, including social studies, science, and career education, students are tested every five years.

No other state currently tests students in foreign languages, although beginning in 1989, New York State will require students to take a Board of Regents examination in foreign languages in order to earn a Regents high-school diploma.

Lacking a model, the Connecticut department contracted with the Educational Testing Service, which develops the advanced-placement and achievement tests in foreign languages for the College Board, to develop the tests. The Scholastic Testing Service administered the tests and analyzed the results.

Officials agreed, Ms. Baron said, that the assessment should point to "the direction we want the program to go," rather than "mirror what is going on."

The state's "common core of learning" recommends that all students be able to communicate in a language other than English, she noted, and that served as the basis for the decision that the test would measure students' reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

A focus on such skills appears to run counter, Mr. Lester said, to the "humanistic" view—expressed by U.S. Secretary of Education William J. Bennett and others—that foreign-language study should emphasize the literature and culture of other lands.

But, he said, state officials believe that language proficiency is the most appropriate instructional goal in such instruction.

"The business sector and the government sector say they need many more people who use foreign languages practically," said the consultant. "If we don't respond adequately to that, we will lose their support, and rightfully so."

Modern Languages and Latin

The test was administered to a sample of 26,855 of the 45,000 high-school students enrolled in second-level courses or above in the four most popular modern languages—French, German, Italian, and Spanish—and in Latin.

Officials chose to test students in Latin because enrollments in that subject have been increasing, Ms. Baron said, and because the officials wanted to "say that's important, too."

All students in modern-language courses took the reading and listening tests, as well as a separate test—in English—measuring knowledge of the customs, history, and geography of the areas where the language is spoken. Those in higher-level courses took a writing test, and a subset of 454 students took a speaking test, which consisted of a half-hour interview with one of 26 specially trained teachers.

Latin students took a test measuring reading-comprehension and grammar skills, as well as knowledge of the English derivation of Latin words and of Roman history and mythology.

The officials also surveyed students, teachers, principals, and foreign-language coordinators to determine their assessments of student abilities and gather data on classroom practices.

The tests were scored using the guidelines for proficiency developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. These standards rate students' proficiency as "novice," "intermediate," "intermediate high," and "advanced."

Test Results

The results show that students generally did well on the tasks requiring "novice" and "intermediate" levels of proficiency, but relatively poorly on items requiring higher levels of proficiency. Performance improved over time, however.

For example, on the reading test, students in the French 3 course correctly answered 80 percent of the "novice" items and 44 percent of the "advanced" items. But those in French 6 correctly answered 95 percent of the "novice" items and 76 percent of the "advanced" items.

Other results show that:

- In general, students performed relatively poorly on the speaking portion of the test. A majority of all students tested, except those in the most advanced German and Spanish courses, performed at the intermediate level or below.
- On the culture test, most students were able to answer questions about European countries where the particular language is spoken, but were unable to answer questions about non-European countries employing it.
- Latin students were able to demonstrate the Latin derivation of English vocabulary, but they had difficulty expressing the meaning of Latin passages in English.
- Female students—who outnumbered males in French, Spanish, and Italian courses—generally outperformed males in reading, listening, and writing in the modern languages, and in grammar and reading comprehension in Latin. However, males outperformed females in the culture tests in Latin and Spanish.
- The assessment is one of the few in which inner-city students outperformed their suburban and rural peers in a subject. Urban students—including many from Spanish-speaking homes—performed better than students from other communities in listening and writing in Spanish.

However, there were no differences between the two groups in the Spanish speaking test. Ms. Baron speculated that this may have been because the native Spanish-speakers employed non-standard Spanish at home.

Use of Target Foreign Language in Connecticut Modern-Language Classes
(Extent of Language Use by Percent of Teachers Surveyed)

	Mostly English	Equal Amounts of English and This Foreign Language	Mostly This Foreign Language	Only This Foreign Language
Teacher speaks				
Course 2	6	52	36	3
Course 3-6	1	15	60	18
Students speak				
Course 2	25	51	20	2
Course 3-6	4	28	51	11
Students hear				
Course 2	5	51	39	3
Course 3-6	1	14	63	16
Students write				
Course 2	1	14	45	37
Course 3-6	0	4	29	61

SOURCE: Connecticut Assessment of Educational Progress

The results' most immediate implication for instruction, officials agreed, is that teachers should try to speak the foreign language at all times during class.

'A Chance To Practice'

"In many classes, if teachers really want you to understand something, they tell it in English," said Mr. Lester. "That undermines the usefulness of a foreign language as a true communicative device."

In addition, he said, teachers should use materials that employ vocabulary from everyday life, including newspapers and letters, rather than formal literary language.

Students who reported using everyday vocabulary scored higher on both the listening and reading tests than those who said they "never" or "almost never" do.

Teachers should also devote a portion of each class to allowing students to convey information in the foreign language, Mr. Lester suggested. "The only way students will learn to speak is to have a chance to practice," he said. "That's something that's not characteristically been done in foreign-language classes."

Students who reported that they and their teachers use the foreign language at least half the time in class outperformed those who spoke English in class on all tests, including the reading test.

Breaking the Mold

The data also suggest that a longer period of foreign-language study is useful in developing proficiency. Students who had taken foreign-language courses before high school outperformed those who had not, and those who planned to continue their language studies did better than others.

The officials stopped short of recommending additional requirements, however.

"We are convinced that we can do more with what we have now," said Ms. Baron. "We haven't begun to tap our resources."

Nevertheless, she noted, less than half of the state's high-school students are enrolled in a foreign-language course, and most who do enroll study the language for two years or less.

Nationally, according to the U.S. Education Department, almost a third of public-high-school students are enrolled in a foreign-language course—the largest proportion in almost 70 years. And 64 percent of high-school graduates in 1987 had taken at least one foreign-language course.

But Chester E. Finn Jr., the department's assistant secretary for educational research and improvement, noted that "these encouraging facts have an obvious downside: They mean that a third of our children graduate without taking even a single high-school course in a foreign language."

"Generally around the country," added Mr. Lester, "students are advised to take a foreign language if they are in a college-preparatory course. That restricts enrollments, mostly, to college-preparatory students, who take the two or three years necessary for college admission."

"We're trying to break that mold," he added. "Two or three years will not result in proficiency."

Connecticut's Proficiency Guidelines

Following are the proficiency guidelines used in the listening and speaking portions of Connecticut's 1987 foreign-language assessment. On accompanying questionnaires, students were asked to rate themselves on the following:

If tomorrow you were to travel to a country where this foreign language is spoken, what would you be able to listen to and understand?

Novice I can understand a few memorized words like greetings or words that are similar to English words.
Intermediate I can understand native speakers who are used to dealing with foreigners and do not mind speaking slowly, repeating, and rewording themselves. I can understand some simple face-to-face conversations, routine telephone exchanges, and short announcements.
Intermediate High I can understand longer conversations of native speakers on a number of topics that refer to different times and places. The speaker can be on television or radio as well as in person.
Advanced I can understand descriptions, interviews, short lectures on familiar topics, and news reports.

If tomorrow you were to travel to a country where the foreign language is spoken, what would you be able to speak?

Novice I can speak using only memorized phrases and common words like colors, clothing, days of the week, and family members.
Intermediate I can speak with a native speaker who is used to dealing with foreigners and does not mind frequent errors in pronunciation and grammar. I can participate in short conversations, make statements about myself and my family, and ask and answer simple questions. I can get through simple survival situations like asking for and giving directions, giving simple messages over the telephone, and ordering a simple meal.
Intermediate High I can speak with a native speaker who is not impatient when I repeat myself from time to time in order to be understood. I can describe familiar subjects related to work and recreation. I can tell a simple story using past and future tenses.
Advanced I can speak with a native speaker who is not used to dealing with foreigners. Although still making errors in grammar, I can describe and narrate situations related to a variety of topics like current events or travel.

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Church Day-Care Units Win Exemption From State Law

Continued from Page 1

Learning Center v. *Jackson*, is the first of its kind to be decided by a federal appellate court. They note that the ruling could influence the outcome of suits across the nation involving state regulation of church-affiliated day-care centers and schools.

The decision is also likely to add fuel to the debate over licensing provisions in a major child-care bill being considered by the Congress.

According to a 1982 study by the National Council of Churches, churches and synagogues are the largest providers of child care in the United States. The study, which the group said covered only a fraction of the nation's religious institutions, identified 15,000 church-housed centers serving about 1 million children a day.

'Teach Thy Children'

Virginia is one of 12 states that exempt church-sponsored centers from licensing requirements.

Although the state has required day-care operators to obtain licenses since 1948, its welfare department broadened the requirements in 1976 to include standards governing building space, equipment, programs, health, nutrition, disciplinary practices, and parental participation.

The Virginia legislature passed the religious exemption to most such regulations in 1979, following complaints from fundamentalist Christian churches, which claimed they could not apply for or accept licenses to perform a task they considered part of their religious mission.

"The concept of first going to the state to carry out what they see as a biblical command to 'go forward and teach thy children' was at the very crux of the issue," said Anthony F. Troy, a lawyer who represented four fundamentalist churches that intervened in the case.

The 1979 law gives religious institutions the option of applying for licensing exemptions. Exempt centers are still required to meet building and fire codes and specified child-staff ratios, but the state does not conduct routine monitoring to assure compliance.

Supreme Court Ruling Cited

Three day-care centers that are not affiliated with churches filed suit against the state in 1980, claiming that the exemption gave sectarian centers a competitive advantage. They alleged that the law violated both their 14th Amendment right to equal protection of the laws and the First Amendment's establishment clause.

U.S. District Judge Richard L. Williams initially held that the exemption was warranted to avoid infringing upon the churches' religious freedom. But the Fourth Circuit Court overturned his decision in 1984, concluding that the exemption was unconstitutionally broad.

The appellate court, however, sent the case back to Judge Williams to consider the arguments of the four sectarian centers that sought permission to intervene in the case. On remand, the district judge agreed with the Fourth Circuit panel that the exemption was unconstitutional.

In overturning that decision this month, the federal appellate panel cited the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling last summer in *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* v. *Amos*, in which it upheld an amendment to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that exempts religious organizations from a ban on religious discrimination.

The case involved a building engineer who was fired from his job in a gymnasium operated by the Mormon church because he failed to qualify as church member.

The High Court deemed the exemption an acceptable accommodation of religion and not a violation of the establishment clause. The law was justified, Associate Justice Byron White wrote, "to alleviate significant governmental interference with the ability of religious organizations to define and carry out their religious mission."

John E. Heintz, a lawyer who represented the three Virginia day-care-center operators who filed the suit, maintained that the Fourth Circuit Court erred in applying the rationale of the *Amos* ruling in the *Forest Hills* case.

While the former case legitimately addressed the right of religious organizations to choose their associates, he said, child-care safety standards "cannot possibly implicate religious choice or the ability of the church to define its mission."

Mr. Heintz said his clients may appeal the decision to the Supreme Court.

Claim Victory

Lawyers who have represented fundamentalist Christians in First Amendment cases say the ruling in the *Forest Hills* case represents an important victory for church groups seeking an end to government regulation.

The decision bolsters the argument "that there are government activities that affect religious institutions which are neither required by the free-exercise clause nor prohibited by the establishment clause," said Bradley P. Jacob, a lawyer with the Christian Legal Society.

"I think it will be another bullet in the arsenal of those of us who believe that church ministries, including their educational ministries, ought not to be regulated and approved by the government," said Michael P. Farris, a lawyer who has been involved in a number of church-state cases.

Mr. Farris added that existing laws against child abuse, rather than state licensing of day-care centers, constitute "the best system to preserve the safety of children and the freedom of our country."

Day-care centers, he said, "can be regulated to death and still abuse children."

Most Support Licensing

Opponents of the decision note, however, that most religious groups support and abide by licensing requirements, even in the 12 states that grant exemptions.

In a 1984 paper on child care, the National Council of Churches endorsed licensing, calling it "an official acknowledgment of public responsibility to maintain healthy, safe, and developmentally appropriate conditions for children" and "consumer protection" for parents.

The Virginia Council of Churches also supports licensing and filed a friend-of-the-court brief on behalf of the plaintiffs in *Forest Hills*, said James F. MacDonald, the group's general minister.

Deann Lineberry, assistant communications director for the Virginia Department of Social Services, said that about 75 percent of the state's church-affiliated child-care centers continued to seek licenses for several years after the exemption was enacted. But she noted that the proportion had slipped to just over 50 percent in recent years.

Proponents of licensing fear that in the increasingly competitive day-care market, the *Forest Hills* decision and others like it could prompt church groups to press for exemptions similar to Virginia's and for a general relaxation of standards.

"The perception that we need more child care . . . gets people's guards down about the notion of quality child care," said Carol Sanger, a law professor at Santa Clara University who specializes in child-care licensing issues. "When you begin to grant exemptions, it signals to the entire day-care industry that less is enough."

Ms. Sanger noted, however, that the ruling does not require states to grant exemptions to church centers, and that state courts have ruled against churches in several cases in which they attempted to demonstrate a right to exemptions.

Other observers have noted that the Fourth Circuit Court's ruling could extend beyond the realm of child care.

Implications for Schools

In cases involving state regulation of religious schools, "we've had the old Fourth Circuit ruling [in the *Forest Hills* case] thrown up in our faces from time to time," Mr. Farris said. "I see no reason now not to turn the tables."

Lee Boothby, general counsel for Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, agreed that the ruling is likely to encourage conservative church groups to challenge state rules affecting their schools. "They're the same people and they see the issue the same way," he said.

Although there are several cases challenging or seeking to uphold various forms of religious-school regulation, only one state—North Dakota—currently requires church-affiliated schools to employ only certified teachers, according to Mr. Farris. A state-court decision upholding that requirement is pending before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

The *Forest Hills* ruling also could have some bearing on the debate in the Congress over the extent to which the federal government should support and regulate church-sponsored centers.

The "act for better child-care services," a measure introduced in the Congress last year, would disallow the use of federal funds to support sectarian activities, and would require centers that receive funds to meet certain federal standards.

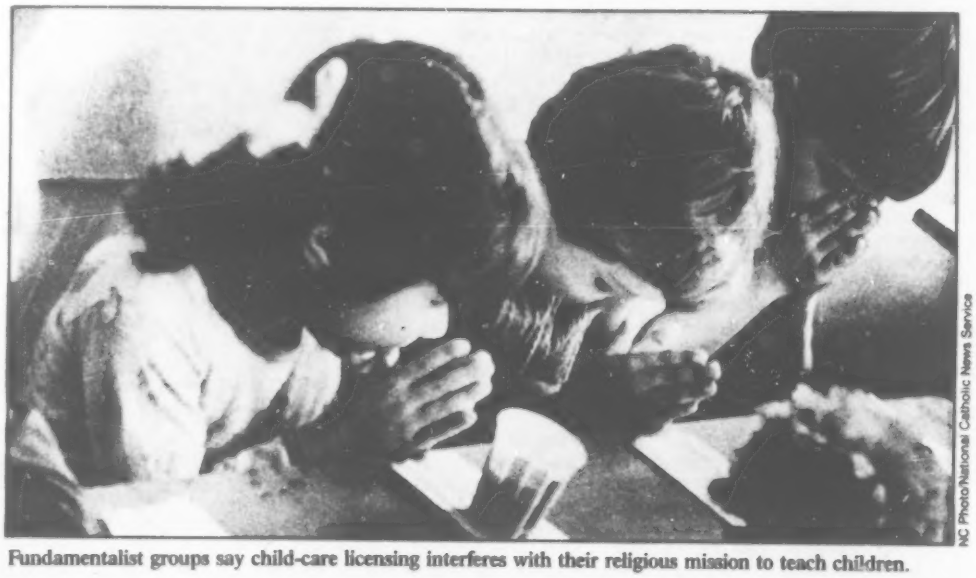
The bill's supporters maintain that it would not interfere with existing state exemptions from licensing.

Since exempt centers would not be eligible for funds, however, the measure would force church institutions to accept the funds or "compromise their principles," Mr. Boothby noted.

"This ruling will indicate to regulators and the Congress that exceptions have to be made for religious organizations," said William Bentley Ball, a lawyer who has been involved in many church-state cases.

Gwen Morgan, a lecturer at Wheelock College who conducted a 1986 study on day-care licensing, said the church-state debate is likely to widen the rift between day-care operators and public policymakers with differing views on who should provide child care and how it should be regulated.

"This kind of issue drives a wedge into any possible consensus, and that's too bad," she said.

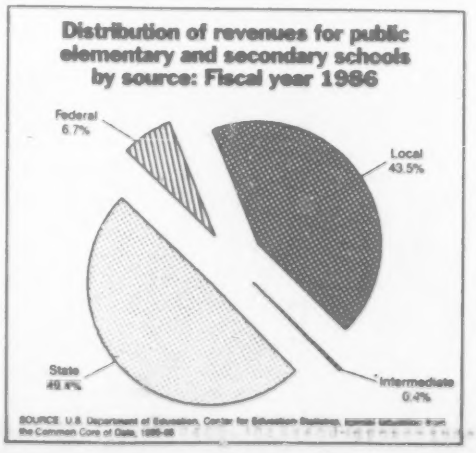


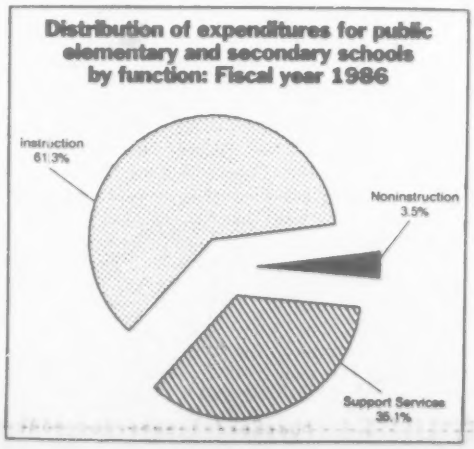
NC Photo/National Catholic News Service

Fundamentalist groups say child-care licensing interferes with their religious mission to teach children.

DATABANK

A recent report by the U.S. Education Department provides a broad fiscal overview of public elementary and secondary education. For fiscal year 1986, it notes, total school revenues nationwide exceeded $149 billion. The following charts show the sources and uses of education funding.


Distribution of revenues for public elementary and secondary schools by source: Fiscal year 1986
Federal 6.7%
Local 43.5%
State 49.4%
Intermediate 0.4%
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, 1986-88


Distribution of expenditures for public elementary and secondary schools by function: Fiscal year 1986
Instruction 61.3%
Noninstruction 3.5%
Support Services 35.1%